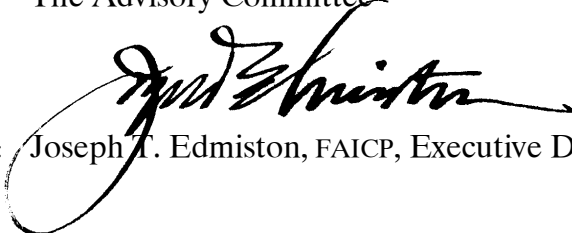


Memorandum

To : The Conservancy
The Advisory Committee

Date: August 22, 2005

From :  Joseph T. Edmiston, FAICP, Executive Director

Subject: **Agenda Item 11: Consideration of resolution supporting grants from the California Department of Transportation to the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority for planning related to the Arroyo Seco Parkway National Scenic Byway.**

Staff Recommendation: That the Conservancy adopt the attached resolution supporting grants from the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) to the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA) for planning related to the Arroyo Seco Parkway National Scenic Byway.

Legislative Authority: Section 33211(c) of Public Resources Code.

Background: The Arroyo Seco Parkway was designated a National Scenic Byway in 2002. The designation recognizes the historic, cultural, natural and recreational intrinsic qualities along the historic parkway. On July 23, 2001, the Conservancy authorized a Cooperative Agreement with Caltrans for planning and implementation of a Scenic Byways Corridor Management Plan (CMP) for the Arroyo Seco Parkway, and granted funds to the MRCA to carry out the project. The Corridor Management Plan was substantially completed in August 2004, but has yet to be adopted by Caltrans. Funding from the Federal Highway Administration's National Scenic Byways Program was recently allocated to Caltrans for two grants that will begin to implement the CMP, and Caltrans requested that MRCA administer the grants.

The first grant is for \$25,000 to create a non-profit Byway Organization. This grant can be renewed for \$25,000 per year for four years. The Byway Organization will be a non-profit organization focused on successful implementation of the CMP, and will become the primary point of contact for community groups, public agencies, and byway travelers. The project will fund hiring a part-time director to establish the organization, create a governing board, create strategic, financial, and long-term plans, and build relationships with byway supporters. Because the Parkway corridor runs through several jurisdictions, there is not an existing agency that is well suited to lead implementation of the CMP. The Board of Directors of the Byway Organization will include representatives of local advocacy groups.

The second grant is for \$336,400 for the development of a Comprehensive Visitor Interpretation and Marketing Plan. This was one of the largest allocations made in this round

of national funding and one of only two projects funded in California. The project will include audience research, an inventory of interpretive assets, development of interpretive themes, and creation of an interpretive plan and design guidelines. Public outreach activities planned include a kick-off meeting, research with focus groups and phone surveys, public meetings of the Interpretive Plan Steering Committee, and outreach to regional umbrella organizations such as the Los Angeles and San Gabriel Rivers Watershed Council, the City of Los Angeles' Ad Hoc River Committee, the Council of Arroyo Seco Agencies, the Council of Arroyo Seco Organizations, ArroyoFest, chambers of commerce, and the convention and visitor bureaus of the cities within the corridor.

Both grants require a 20% match, which will be provided by in-kind services from several local organizations, including the Southwest Museum, the Gamble House, North East Trees, Los Angeles Conservancy, Los Angeles River Center and Gardens, Highland Park Heritage Trust, California Route 66 Preservation Foundation, and Arroyo Seco Foundation. Copies of the grant applications are attached.